

“THE FROG IN THE POT”

by Lyz Weaver

KEY VERSE:

“All their days as Nazirites they are holy to the Lord.” - Numbers 6:8

FAITH STORY:

Numbers 6:1-12, Judges 13-16

FAITH FOCUS:

Samson was set aside by God from the time of his conception. He was set aside as a Nazirite. Certain vows applied to Samson’s life because of this special calling. These vows are outlined in Numbers, Chapter 6. But Samson was very human. He faced temptations and often found himself sacrificing his calling in pursuit of his own desires. The choices Samson made that took him away from the Nazirite calling on his life didn’t happen all at once—it was a gradual progression.

SESSION GOAL:

Help students identify areas in their lives where they have been slowly and subtly pulled away from their relationship with God.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to identify at least three of the situations in which Samson fell away from his Nazirite calling.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- 1 CD player
- 2 CD (instrumental preferred)
- 3 Snack
- 4 Drinks
- 5 Cups
- 6 Napkins
- 7 Dry erase board or newsprint and markers
- 8 A frog for each person—these could be large or small, purchased at a secondhand store or new, cloth, ceramic, plastic—whatever. Just bring a variety of frogs that you will be giving to the students.

Have snack and drinks prepared and arranged on table ahead of time. Have music playing quietly as students enter.

Place all of the frogs in one or more large pots, place them in a corner of the room, and cover them up. Students should not look in the pots until the Respond activity.

SESSION OUTLINE

FOCUS: (10 minutes)

Provide a snack for the youth and allow ten minutes at the start of class for the students to just relax and talk with one another. Have a CD player in the room on low volume, playing background music—preferably something without vocals. As the students enjoy their snack and conversation, gradually turn up the volume of the music so that the increase is hardly perceivable. (Don't let them see you do it.) Continue to do so until the students realize that the music or conversation has become uncomfortably loud.

CONNECT: (5 minutes)

When students notice that the music and conversation have grown quite loud, turn the music down and ask:

Did you notice the music getting louder? Would you have noticed it more if it had happened all at one time?

Say:

It's funny how sometimes we don't notice something until it becomes so obvious that it's unavoidable. It's kind of like the story of the frog in the kettle. A person wanted to boil a frog (for whatever reason a person would want to boil a frog) so she heated a few inches of water in a pot and dropped the frog in. The frog (not being a genius, but knowing hot when he felt it!) immediately jumped out. This continued, until out of frustration (and not wanting to be outwitted by a frog) the person decided to instead put the frog into a few inches of water in a pot at the temperature that would make a frog happy. So she did. And as the frog sat happily in his "bath", she very slowly turned up the heat until the frog, never quite realizing what had happened, became dinner!

When we gradually allow the practices of the surrounding culture to mix with our faith in God we have what is termed "syncretism"—the blending of the two. This usually happens gradually, sometimes without our even realizing it! It is dangerous because often it combines two powers that are not intended to operate as one. For example, combining God and nationality creates a national God, not a God for all people as the Bible describes. Today we want to look at the story of Samson and how, in a sense, he became the "frog in the kettle."

EXPLORE THE BIBLE: (15–20 minutes)

Ask a student to read aloud Numbers 6:1-12. Discuss and list on dry-erase board or newsprint the expectations involved with being a Nazirite.

- Eat nothing that comes from a grapevine
- No razor may be used on his/her head
- He/she must not go near a dead body

All these things are to be done in order that the person, the Nazirite set aside for God, will not be defiled or made unclean.

Divide the class into three groups (if you have a large group—12 or more—divide into six groups) and assign each group one of the following to read together : Judges 14, Judges 15,

and Judges 16. (If you divide into six groups assign two groups to each chapter)

Ask each group to carefully compare the Nazirite vows written earlier to the scripture passage they have been assigned. When each group has finished comparing their scripture, ask the following questions and write each response on the board or newsprint as well.

"Were there places in the scripture you read that Samson disregarded his calling as a Nazirite? What were those instances?"

"Where did Samson's disobedience snowball into bigger problems for him and in his relationship with God?"

"Did these incidences of disobedience happen all at once, or collectively over time?"

"When do you think Samson realized that he had been 'the frog in the pot', or did he realize it at all?"

APPLY: (15 minutes)

Divide students into two equal size groups, one group to debate that it's okay for Christians to see violent films, and the other against Christians seeing violent films. The teacher will act as the debate facilitator.

Give the students two minutes to prepare their arguments and then direct each team to listen carefully to the other team before responding. Remind the students that they do not personally have to agree with the side they are debating for but to debate it as if they do!

After the debate, discuss: Is this an example of a "frog in a pot"? Why or why not?

RESPOND: (5–10 minutes)

Play the background music again during this activity. Uncover the pots of frogs and invite students to choose a frog that they like. Then say:

Often, though we don't always realize it, we become the "frog in the pot." Let's take a few minutes to think individually about where in our own lives we have allowed the temperature to raise unnoticed, threatening our calling to a relationship with God.

What have we done or what thoughts have we had that have pulled us into hotter and hotter water? Hold your frog and think about those times in your life, because becoming aware that the heat has been turned up is the first step to getting out of the pot!!

Encourage students to take their frogs home and be reminded whenever they see their frog of the dangers of being a "frog in a pot."

INSIGHTS FROM THE SCRIPTURE:

Samson was set aside before his birth to be a servant of God. An angel appeared to his parents and instructed them in the way that Samson should be raised. Nazirites were instructed not to eat anything produced by a grapevine, to not cut their hair, and to stay away from anything dead. Samson often made choices that were in opposition to the Nazirite calling that was made upon his life from the beginning. He walked through vineyards, allowed himself to be manipulated into cutting his hair, and ate honey from a dead lion carcass! God raised Samson up as a judge at this time, despite his imperfections. Samson often struggled with syncretism, a combining of his surrounding culture and his relationship with God. The syncretism, though gradual, eventually led to Samson's loss of power and ultimately, his death.